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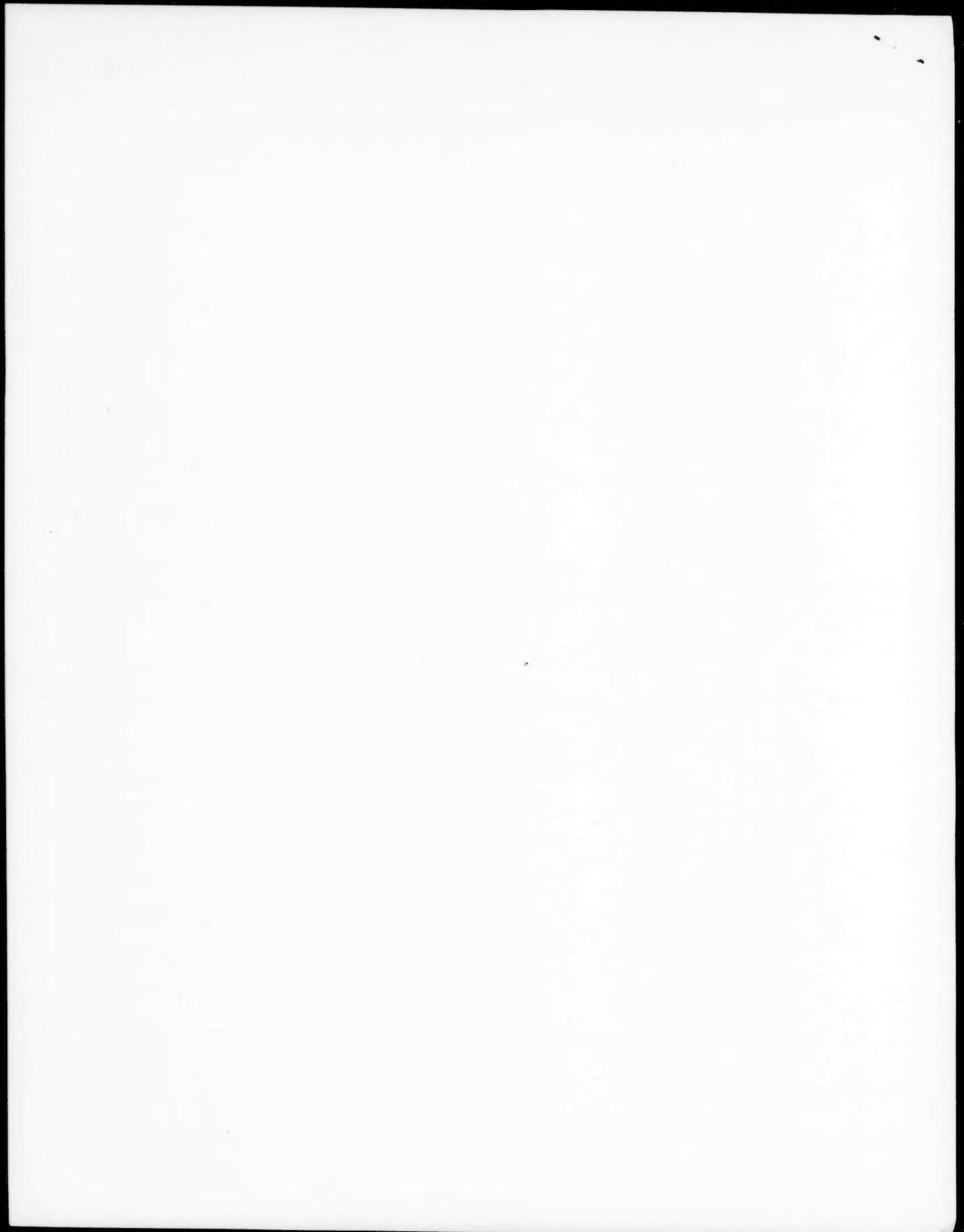
The snow is so deep in Jerusalem today that we cannot drive to our excavations at Jericho, so I shall write a newsletter instead. This may be slow in reaching you since there is a meter and half of snow in Transjordan. This is the deepest snow in Jerusalem since 1919 according to modern rumor. On the level it seems to be about 20 inches or so in depth. We heard that it snowed in Jericho, the rarest of phenomena.

Visitors often come to the School at Christmas time and this year was no exception. We had the following guests:- Professor Paul R. Bowman, of Grace Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, Dr. Louis T. Talbot, President of Los Angeles Bible Institute, Los Angeles, Calif., Professor Ralph Earle of the Nazarene Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, Rev. Allen B. Miller, Kansas City, Kansas, and Rev. C.E. Winslow, Roanoke, Virginia. Prof. Earle inaugurated something new in the way of Palestine trips. He used the Christmas vacation at his Seminary as a chance to fly to Jerusalem and Bethlehem to spend the Christmas season. The most distinguished recent visitor to the School has been Mr. James Keen, Field Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees, who visited us to make arrangements about the use of Arab refugee labor on our excavations.

January found the School staff scattered. Professor and Mrs. Kenneth Clark with Mr. Howard Kee are at Mt. Sinai microfilming the famous library there. It is a three months assignment. We hope that he will write a newsletter about his microfilming projects from there.

I am away from Jerusalem in the daytime as we have begun the excavations of Tulul Abu el-Alayiq, commonly identified as New Testament Jericho. Mr. Dimitri Baramki, senior Archaeological Officer in the Department of Antiquities under the former mandatory government and the excavator of the great Arab palace at Khirbet Mafjar not far from Jericho, is my associate. In a few days we shall start work at Khirbet en-Nitla, one of the several sites identified as the Gilgal of Joshua's conquest. The two sites are sufficiently close to one another that the staff can watch both, especially as the latter dig is a minor one and will only last a brief period. This Jordan Valley campaign is the seventh joint expedition of the ASOR and the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary. A new partner has recently been added, for the United Nations are using the expedition as a pilot project on the use of Arab refugee labor. They pay the expense of basket carriers up to 150 and we pay all other expenses.

Tulul Abu el-Alayiq is a large site on both sides of the Wadi Qelt just below where the canyon opens out onto the great Jordan plain. The most prominent feature is the Tell on the south side of the Wadi. It has fascinated archaeologists of all periods. In 1886, Captain Warren trenched the mound and in 1911 the Germans worked on both the Tell itself and the Roman buildings at its base along the wadi. During the first world war the English used it as a military post and they also



modified the mound. Indeed, tin cans instead of potsherds show up in the first foot or so of debris at the foot of the Tell.

Much of our first work was to remove the debris of the English and German archaeologists. No major finds were made there, but the large quantity of excellent ~~pink~~ painted plaster and the small quantity of carved plaster testified respectively to the Roman and Arabic occupations. (The Germans left very little pottery in their dumps). Our work is only in midseason, as we began January 10th. Therefore no final conclusions can yet be made but the following observations seem legitimate. The top level of the Tell is Arabic of the 8th Century. It has much in common with Khirbet Mafjar. Apparently both sites were badly damaged by earthquake. The most interesting finds in the upper levels are good pottery and a broken marble slab carrying selections taken from the Koran. The Arabs of course re-used the great Roman buildings at the foot of the Tell.

The debris of the Roman level that was worked over by former diggers on the Tell is very great and only a small section is left undisturbed. A few Roman walls were showing up in the area at the close of excavations last week. The pottery found with them, however, is not sufficiently unique for any close dating. At least some of the Roman buildings on the Tell follow the basic architectural pattern of the buildings which stretch along the wadi for about 300 meters. The basic Roman masonry pattern is opus reticulatum. In this type of masonry walls are faced by small stones about four inches square set in mortar diagonally. The pattern is beautiful especially when finished off with opus quadratum at the door jamb. The colored plaster found in the ruins is solid in color with only a small percentage of fragments showing any design. The buildings have a complicated history and it is yet too soon to see their full picture. Earthquakes have made our work more difficult especially when they have left the rooms full of fallen fragments of walls 120 centimeters in thickness. They do, however, have this in their favor, that they let us see the interior construction methods.

The major feature of the Tell has turned out to be a massive tower-like fortification under the Roman level. It is the real heart of the Tell and apparently occupied the entire top of the Tell in its period. At the present stage of excavation, it looks as if it will be a square on the exterior and a circular one on the interior. The one exterior wall excavated is about 20 meters long. At the northeast corner where the only interior section has been uncovered, we have the arc of a circle. In one tower room here we have already gone down five meters which brings us down toward the level of the plain on which the Tell rises. Remains of numerous wooden beams in the walls show where one platform in the tower was located. The sherds in this tower room are too scant for dating, but one wonders if this may turn out to be one of the towers captured by Pompey. As soon as we can resume work after this snow storm larger crews will be put to work on the great Roman buildings at the foot of the Tell and perhaps another unit of them upstream may be opened up. Dr. Sydney A. Temple of Essex, Connecticut, and Professor Umhau Wolf of Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary are joining the staff.

There are no other major excavations this winter in Arab Palestine or Transjordan. Archaeological Museums, however, are news items. The great Palestine Archaeological Museum, closed to the public since May 1948, will soon reopen. The department of Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is building a fine new museum on the citadel hill in Amman. Transjordan has unique archaeological material and for the first time will be able to present it properly to the general public. Mr. Dimitri Barakat has completed plans for remodeling the Muslim Museum in connection with the Haram esh-Sharif, Arab Jerusalem is making great plans for entertaining Holy Year visitors. Members of the Schools are welcome to stay at the School whenever rooms are available. We also welcome visitors at the excavations.

James L. Kelso, Director.